Background

On Saturday 25th April 2015, an earthquake measuring 7.8 on the Richter Scale was recorded in Nepal, 80 km to the North-West of Kathmandu and 68 Km east of Pokhara. Current reports suggest the capital has suffered substantial destruction to critical infrastructure, including buildings, roads, electricity, water supply and communication networks, however, Kathmandu Valley, an area closer to the epicentre is expected to be worse affected. Reports indicate a large number of casualties and widespread damage throughout the affected areas. The Government of Nepal has declared a state of emergency in the country.

The Logistics Cluster has been activated to support the humanitarian community in their efforts to deliver life-saving relief items across affected areas in Nepal.

Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

The geographical area affected by the earthquake includes mountainous and remote areas, increasing the potential for logistics constraints on operations. Extensive damage to infrastructure in the affected areas has been reported. The airport of Kathmandu is operational but due to its size it is expected to become congested when the large amount of relief items start coming through.

The magnitude of the disaster and number of people affected calls for a coordinated and efficient response from the international community proportionate to the scope of the disaster to avoid bottlenecks and possible overlaps.

The expected volumes of relief items being brought into the country, in conjunction with damaged infrastructure and limited capacity, will require the setting up of staging areas in and outside Nepal, as well as a number of operations and logistics hubs in the affected areas. Road and air transport options will also be made available to the humanitarian community according to need.

Objectives

The foremost objective of the Logistics Cluster in Nepal is to support the Government-led response by coordinating with International and National NGOs, the UN system and the Private Sector, in order to optimize logistics efforts, and hence, the delivery of various humanitarian assistance programmes.

This objective will be met through execution of the following activities in response to the earthquake:

The following services will be made available to the humanitarian community for an initial period of three months.

1. Coordination:

In order to facilitate a unified response effort on behalf of the humanitarian community, the following coordination mechanism will be provided to minimise duplication of logistics activities during the response:

Logistics Cluster Coordination Cell established in Kathmandu to support overall coordination of the Logistics Cluster operation in Nepal. Regular Logistics Cluster Coordination meetings will be held with partners for the purpose of briefing on, updating, and revising operational plans as needed; information sharing; analysis of existing and emerging logistics gaps & bottlenecks. Logistics capacity will also be augmented in Pokhara and Birganj through the deployment of dedicated logistics staff.

In addition, the Logistics Cluster will liaise with the National Authorities to coordinate Civil-Military interaction with national
and international military entities. The Logistics Cluster will focus primarily on logistics and operational coordination for the use of military assets in relief activities.

2. Logistics Services:

The services made available by the Logistics Cluster are not intended to replace the logistics capacities of other agencies or organisations, but rather to supplement them through the provision of common services. The following services may be provided at no cost to the user, depending on the availability of funds:

- **Humanitarian Staging Area (HSA)** in Kathmandu International Airport has been set-up as part of the Logistics Response Plan drafted in 2013, as a contingency plan in the event of a natural disaster. The HSA has been established to avoid congestion at the main entry points of affected areas and ease the flow of life-saving commodities, where large-scale relief activities are being undertaken.

- **Temporary Storage and tracking**: A logistics hub will be established in Birganj at the border with India and will be one of the main road entry points to rapidly forward relief to the affected areas of Nepal. Furthermore, hubs including temporary storage space will be made available to humanitarian organisations in three or more smaller logistics hubs to be set-up at strategic positions in country including Pokhara. These hubs will be placed at locations where the road infrastructure still allows larger trucks to reach and will support coordination and all services to the affected areas including those harder to reach locations.

- **Logistics Corridor**: The Logistics Cluster will establish a logistics corridor from India should congestion limit operations at Kathmandu International Airport. This may include road transportation from Calcutta and tactical airlift from Lucknow Airport in India to Birganj from where onward transport into the affected areas such as Pokhara can be facilitated.

- **Air Transport**: One or more helicopters will be made available for the movement of most urgent humanitarian cargo to inaccessible and remote areas. Destinations and schedule will be based on need.

- **Road Transport**: To augment the transport capacity, a dedicated truck fleet will be made available in Kathmandu for inter-agency cargo movement.

- Cargo stored or moved through the Logistics Cluster will be tracked using the Relief Item Tracking Application (RITA).

As “Provider of Last Resort” WFP, through the Logistics Cluster, is responsible only for providing logistics services that fill identified gaps in logistics capacity, where access and funding permit and where these gaps limit the ability of the humanitarian community to meet the needs of the affected population.

3. Information Management:

The following Information Management (IM) activities will be undertaken by the Logistics Cluster in the interest of promoting and facilitating the sharing of logistics information among all organisations conducting response operations. To ensure an efficient and effective response by the humanitarian community, the Logistics Cluster will collect, consolidate, and share information, including GIS, related to on-going activities, key infrastructure, important procedures, such as customs, access constraints, and available storage and transport capacity in the affected areas.

This Concept of Operations is a live document and the activities will be adapted and revised as the situation unfolds and further assessment results become available, including the possible provision of additional logistics common services as required by the humanitarian community.
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